THE GERMAN SPIRIT

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BOOKS ON GERMANY

BY KUNO FRANCKE

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BY

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TO MY BROTHER

DR. ALEX FRANCKE

of

BERNE, SWITZERLAND

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FOREWORD

Of the three papers published here together, the first one was written in the spring of 1914; it was delivered as Convocation Address at the University of Chicago in June, and appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly* for November of that year. The second essay was written in the spring of 1915 and appeared in the *Atlantic* for October. The third, a lecture delivered at the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences and various other educational institutions in February, 1916, has not been published before.

It seems to me that the three papers together present a view of contemporary Germany which may help Americans to understand better both the sources of enduring German greatness and the reasons why German achievements have so often

failed to appeal to America. At the present moment of blinding passion, the antithesis between American and German feeling has become so acute that a reasonable and sympathetic view of German aspirations has become well-nigh impossible. I should be glad if this little book could do something to restore sympathy and reasonableness.

K. F.

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I

GERMAN LITERATURE AND THE AMERICAN TEMPER

I

GERMAN LITERATURE AND THE AMERICAN TEMPER

I

In this age[1] of exchange professorships, peace dinners, and other means of cementing friendships between great nations, it is a somewhat ungrateful, if not dangerous, undertaking to emphasize differences of national temper. If, then, I make bold to venture a few remarks upon the essential dissimilarity of the American and the German temper, and upon the effect of this dissimilarity on the standing of Ger-

[1] This and the following sentences, written two months before the outbreak of the war, sound now grimly frivolous and irrelevant. I leave them unchanged as an involuntary comment upon the blindness of human conditions.

man literature in America, I had better preface them by saying that nothing is further removed from my mind than the desire to sow seeds of international discord, even if it were in my power to do so. Indeed, having entertained for some thirty years relations to both Germany and the United States which might be described as a sort of intellectual bigamy, I have come to be as peaceable a person as it behooves a man in such a delicate marital situation to be. But while I have honestly tried in these thirty years to make the two divinities presiding over my intellectual household understand and appreciate each other, I have again and again been forced to the conclusion that such a mutual understanding of my two loves was for the most part a matter of conscious and conscientious effort, and hardly ever the result of instinctive give-and-take.

Perhaps the most fundamental, or shall I say elementary, difference between the

German temper and the American may be expressed by the word "slowness." Is there any possible point of view from which slowness might appear to an American as something desirable? I think not. Indeed, to call a thing or a person slow seems to spread about them an atmosphere of complete and irredeemable hopelessness. Compare with this the reverently sturdy feelings likely to be aroused in a German breast by the words "langsam und feierlich" inscribed over a religious or patriotic hymn, and imagine a German Männerchor singing such a hymn, with all the facial and tonal symptoms of joyful and devout slowness of cerebral activity—and you have in brief compass a specimen-demonstration of the difference in *tempo* in which the two national minds habitually move.

It has been said that the "langsamer Schritt" of the German military drill was in the last resort responsible for the astounding victories which in 1870 shook

the foundations of Imperial France. Similarly, it might be said that slowness of movement and careful deliberateness are at the bottom of most things in which Germans have excelled. To be sure, the most recent development of Germany, particularly in trade and industry, has been most rapid, and the whole of German life of to-day is thoroughly American in its desire for getting ahead and for working under high pressure. But this is a condition forced upon Germany from without through international competition and the exigencies of the world-market rather than springing from the inner tendency of German character itself. And it should not be forgotten that it was the greatest German of modern times, Goethe, who, anticipating the present era of speed, uttered this warning: "Railways, express posts, steamships, and all possible facilities for swift communication,—these are the things in which the civilized world is now chiefly

concerned, and by which it will over-civilize itself and arrive at mediocrity."

As to German literary and artistic achievements, is it not true that—for better or worse—their peculiarly German stamp consists to a large extent in a certain slowness of rhythm and massiveness of momentum? Goethe himself is a conspicuous example. Even in his most youthful and lively drama, *Goetz von Berlichingen,* what a broad foundation of detail, how deliberately winding a course of action, how little of dramatic intensity, how much of intimate revelation of character! His *Iphigenie* and *Tasso* consist almost exclusively of the gentle and steady swaying to and fro of contrasting emotions; they carry us back and forth in the ebb and flow of passion, but they never hurl us against the rocks or plunge us into the whirlpool of mere excitement. No wonder the American college boy finds them slow. And what shall we say of *Wilhelm Meister?* Not only

American college boys, I fear, will sympathize with Mariane's falling soundly asleep when Wilhelm entertains her through six substantial chapters with the account of his youthful puppet-plays and other theatrical enterprises. And yet, what thoughtful reader can fail to see that it is just this halting method of the narrative, this lingering over individual incidents and individual states of mind, this careful balancing of light and shade, this deliberate arrangement of situations and conscious grouping of characters, this constant effort to see the particular in the light of the universal, to extract wisdom out of the seemingly insignificant, and to strike the water of life out of the hard and stony fact—that it is this which makes *Wilhelm Meister* not only a piece of extraordinary artistic workmanship, but also a revelation of the moving powers of human existence.

Schiller's being was keyed to a much

higher pitch than Goethe's, and vibrated much more rapidly. But even his work, and above all his greatest dramatic productions, from *Wallenstein* to *Wilhelm Tell,* are marked by stately solemnity rather than by swiftness of movement; he too loves to pause, as it were, ever and anon, to look at his own creations, to make them speak to him and unbosom themselves to him about their innermost motives. No other dramatist has used the monologue more successfully than he as a means of affording moments of rest from the ceaseless flow of action.

As for the German Romanticists,—who has decried more persistently than they the restlessness and hasty shallowness of human endeavor? Who has sung more rapturously the praises of the deep, impenetrable, calm, unruffled working of nature, the abyss of silent, immovable forces in whose brooding there is contained the best and holiest of existence? And must it not be ad-

mitted that, in the best of their own productions, such as parts of Novalis's rhythmical prose, some Romantic lyrics, some Romantic paintings, above all in the work of Beethoven and his peers, we receive the impression of a grand, benign, heavenly, all-comprehensive being, slowly and majestically breathing, slowly and majestically irradiating calm and joy and awe and all the blessings of life.

Something of this same slowness of movement we find throughout the nineteenth century in many of the most characteristically German literary achievements. We find it in Kleist's *Michael Kohlhaas,* with its seemingly imperturbable, objective, cold, and circumstantial account of events which make one's blood boil and one's fist clench. We find it in Otto Ludwig's *Between Heaven and Earth,* with its constant reiteration of the fundamental contrast between the two leading figures, and with its constant insistence on the relentlessness of

Fate, which gradually, imperceptibly, but inevitably drives them to the deadly clash with each other. We find it in the diffuse, lingering, essentially epic style of most of Gerhart Hauptmann's dramas. We find it even in a man of such extraordinary nervous excitability and sensitiveness as Richard Wagner. Nothing perhaps is more German in Richard Wagner than the broad, steady, sustained onward march of his musical themes,—notably so in *Tristan, Die Meistersinger,* and *Die Walküre.* Surely there is no haste here; the question of time seems entirely eliminated; these masses of sound move on regardless, one might say, of the limitations of the human ear; they expand and contract, gather volume and disperse, in endless repetition, yet in always new combinations; they advance and recede, surge on, ebb away and rise again to a mighty flood, with something like rhythmical fatality, so that the hearer finally has no other choice than to

surrender to them as to a mighty and overwhelming pressing on of natural forces. To be sure, I have known people—and not only Americans—who would have preferred that the death-agonies of Tristan in the last act should be somewhat accelerated by a stricter adherence of Isolde's boat to schedule time.

A striking consequence of this difference of tempo in which the American mind and the German naturally move, and perhaps the most conspicuous example of the practical effect of this difference upon national habits, is the German regard for authority and the American dislike of it. For the slower circulation in the brain of the German makes him more passive and more easily inclined to accept the decisions of others for him, while the self-reliant and agile American is instinctively distrustful of any decision which he has not made himself.

Here, then, is another sharp distinction

between the two national tempers, another serious obstacle to the just appreciation of the German spirit by the American.

I verily believe that it is impossible for an American to understand the feelings which a loyal German subject, particularly of the conservative sort, entertains toward the State and its authority. That the State should be anything more than an institution for the protection and safeguarding of the happiness of individuals; that it might be considered as a spiritual, collective personality, leading a life of its own, beyond and above the life of individuals; that service for the State, therefore, or the position of a State official, should be considered as something essentially different from any other kind of useful employment, —these are thoughts utterly foreign to the American mind, and very near and dear to the heart of a German. The American is apt to receive an order or a communication from a public official with feelings of

suspicion and with a silent protest; the German is apt to feel honored by such a communication and fancy himself elevated thereby to a position of some public importance.

The American is so used to thinking of the police as the servant, and mostly a very poor servant, of his private affairs, that on placards forbidding trespassing upon his grounds he frequently adds an order, "Police take notice"; the German, especially if he does not look particularly impressive himself, will think long before he makes up his mind to approach one of the impressive-looking *Schutzleute* to be found at every street corner, and deferentially ask him the time of day. The American dislikes the uniform as an embodiment of irksome discipline and subordination, he values it only as a sort of holiday outfit and for parading purposes; to the German the "King's Coat" is something sacrosanct and inviolable, an em-

bodiment of highest national service and highest national honor.

With such fundamental antagonism in the American to the German view of state and official authority, is it surprising that a large part of German literature, that part which is based on questions touching the relations of the individual to State and country, should have found very little sympathy with the average American reader? It has taken more than a hundred years for that fine apotheosis of Prussian discipline, Heinrich von Kleist's *Prinz von Homburg,* to find its way into American literature through the equally fine translation by Hermann Hagedorn; and I doubt whether this translation would have been undertaken but for its author's having German blood in his veins.

As for other representative men of nineteenth-century German literature who stood for the subordination of the individual to monarchical authority,—men like Hebbel,

W. H. Riehl, Gustav Freytag, Ernst von Wildenbruch,—have remained practically without influence, and certainly without following, in America.

II

Closely allied with this German sense of authority, and again in sharp contrast with American feeling, is the German distrust of the average man. In order to realize the fundamental polarity of the two national tempers in this respect also, one need only think of the two great representatives of American and German political life in the nineteenth century, Lincoln and Bismarck. Lincoln in every fiber of his being a son of the people, an advocate of the common man, an ideal type of the best instincts of the masses, a man who could express with the simplicity of a child his ineradicable belief in the essential right-mindedness of the plain

folk. Bismarck with every pulse-beat of his heart the chivalric vassal of his imperial master; the invincible champion of the monarchical principle; the caustic scorner of the crowd; the man who, whenever he notices symptoms in the crowd that he is gaining popularity with it, becomes suspicious of himself and feels inclined to distrust the justice of his own cause; the merciless cynic who characterizes the futile oratorical efforts of a silver-tongued political opponent by the crushing words: "He took me for a mass meeting."

But not only the political life of the two countries presents this difference of attitude toward the average man. The great German poets and thinkers of the last century were all of them aristocrats by temper: Goethe, Schiller, Kant, Schelling, Hegel, the Romanticists, Heine, Schopenhauer, Wagner, Nietzsche—is there a man among them who would not have begged off from being classed with the advocates

of common sense or being called a spokesman of the masses? What a difference from two of the most characteristically American men of letters, Walt Whitman and Emerson—the one consciously and purposely a man of the street, glorying, one might say boastfully, in his comradeship with the crudest and roughest of tramps and dock-hands; the other a philosopher of the field, a modern St. Francis, a prophet of the homespun, an inspired interpreter of the ordinary,—perhaps the most enlightened apostle of democracy that ever lived. Is it not natural that a people which, although with varying degrees of confidence, acknowledges such men as Lincoln, Walt Whitman, and Emerson as the spokesmen of its convictions on the value of the ordinary intellect, should on the whole have no instinctive sympathy with a people whose intellectual leaders are men like Bismarck, Goethe, and Richard Wagner?

To be sure, there is another, a democratic

side to German life, and this side naturally appeals to Americans. But German democracy is still in the making, it has not yet achieved truly great things, it has not yet found a truly great exponent either in politics or in literature. In literature its influence has exhausted itself largely, on the one hand, in biting satire of the ruling classes, such as is practiced to-day most successfully by the contributors to *Simplizissimus* and similar papers, sympathizing with Socialism; on the other hand, in idyllic representations of the healthy primitiveness of peasant life and the humble contentedness and respectability of the artisan class, the small tradespeople and subaltern officials—I am thinking, of course, of such sturdy and charming stories of provincial Germany as have been written by Wilhelm Raabe, Fritz Reuter, Peter Rosegger, and Heinrich Seidel. It may be that all these men have been paving the way for a great epoch of German de-

mocracy; it may be that some time there will arise truly constructive minds that will unite the whole of the German people in an irresistible movement for popular rights, which would give the average man the same dominating position which he enjoys in this country. But clearly this time has not yet come. In Germany, expert training still overrules common sense and dilettanteism.

The German distrust of the average intellect has for its logical counterpart another national trait which it is hard for Americans to appreciate—the German bent for vague intuitions of the infinite. It seems strange in this age of cold observation of facts, when the German scientist and the German captain of industry appear as the most striking embodiments of national greatness, to speak of vague intuitions of the infinite as a German characteristic. Yet throughout the centuries this longing for the infinite has been the

source of much of the best and much of the poorest in German intellectual achievements. From this longing for the infinite sprang the deep inwardness and spiritual fervor which impart such a unique charm to the contemplative thought of the German mystics of the fourteenth century. In this longing for the infinite lay Luther's greatest inspiration and strength. It was the longing for the infinite which Goethe felt when he made his Faust say,—

The thrill of awe is man's best quality.

This longing for the infinite was the very soul of German Romanticism; and all its finest conceptions, the *Blue Flower* of Novalis, Fichte's *Salvation by the Will,* Hegel's *Self-revelation of the Idea,* Schopenhauer's *Redemption from the Will,* Nietzsche's *Revaluation of All Values,* are nothing but ever new attempts to find a body for this soul.

But while there has thus come a great

wealth of inspiration and moral idealism from this German bent for reveling in the infinite, there has also come from it one of the greatest national defects: German vagueness, German lack of form, the lack of sense for the shape and proportion of finite things. Here, then, we meet with another discrepancy between the American and the German character. For nothing is more foreign to the American than the mystic and the vague, nothing appeals more to him than what is clear-cut, easy to grasp, and well proportioned; he cultivates "good form" for its own sake, not only in his social conduct, but also in his literary and artistic pursuits, and he usually attains it easily and instinctively, often at the expense of the deeper substance. To the German, on the contrary, form is a problem. He is principally absorbed in the subject-matter, the idea, the inner meaning; he struggles to give this subject-matter, this inner meaning, an adequate

outer form; and he often fails. To comfort himself, he has invented a technical term designed to cover up his failure; he falls back on the "inner form" of his productions.

German literature and art afford numerous examples of this continuous and often fruitless struggle with the problem of form. Even in the greatest of German painters and sculptors,—Dürer, Peter Vischer, Adolph Menzel, Arnold Böcklin, —there are visible the furrows and the scars imprinted upon them by the struggle; rarely did they achieve a complete and undisputed triumph. Does the literature of any other people possess an author so crowded with facts and observations, so full of feeling, so replete with vague intimations of the infinite, and so thoroughly unreadable as Jean Paul? Is there a parallel anywhere to the formlessness and utter lack of style displayed in Gutzkow's ambitious nine-volumed *Kulturromane?* Did

any writer ever consume himself in a more tragic and more hopeless striving for a new artistic form than did Kleist and Hebbel? Among the greatest of living European writers is there one so uneven in his work, so uncertain of his form, so inclined to constant experiment and to constant change from extreme naturalism to extreme mysticism, and from extreme mysticism to extreme naturalism, as Gerhart Hauptmann? And who but a German could have written the Second Part of *Faust,* that tantalizing and irresistible *pot-pourri* of meters and styles and ideas, of symbolism and satire, of metaphysics and passion, of dryness and sublimity, of the dim mythical past, up-to-date modernity, and prophetic visions of the future—all held together by the colossal striving of an individual reaching out into the infinite?

III

I have reserved for the last place in this review of differences of German and American temper another trait intimately connected with the German craving for the infinite; I give the last place to the consideration of this trait, because it seems to me the most un-American of all. I mean the passion for self-surrender.

I think I need not fear any serious opposition if I designate self-possession as the cardinal American virtue, and consequently as the cardinal American defect also. It is impossible to imagine that so unmanly a proverb as the German—

Wer niemals einen Rœusch gehabt
Der ist kein rechter Mann—

should have originated in New England or Ohio. But it is impossible also to conceive that the author of *Werthers Leiden* should have obtained his youthful impres-

sions and inspirations in New York City. "Conatus sese conservandi unicum virtutis fundamentum"—this Spinozean motto may be said to contain the essence of the American decalogue of conduct. Always be master of yourself; never betray any irritation, or disappointment, or any other weakness; never slop over; never give yourself away; never make yourself ridiculous—what American would not admit that these are foremost among the rules by which he would like to regulate his conduct?

It can hardly be denied that this habitual self-mastery, this habitual control over one's emotions, is one of the chief reasons why so much of American life is so uninteresting and so monotonous. It reduces the number of opportunities for intellectual friction, it suppresses the manifestation of strong individuality, often it impoverishes the inner life itself. But, on the other hand, it has given the American that sureness of motive, that healthiness of appetite,

that boyish frolicsomeness, that purity of sex-instincts, that quickness and litheness of manners, which distinguish him from most Europeans; it has given to him all those qualities which insure success and make their possessor a welcome member of any kind of society.

If, in contradistinction to this fundamental American trait of self-possession, I designate the passion for self-surrender as perhaps the most significant expression of national German character, I am well aware that here again I have touched upon the gravest defects as well as the highest virtues of German national life.

The deepest seriousness and the noblest loyalty of German character is rooted in this passion.

Sich hinzugeben ganz und eine Wonne
Zu fühlen die ewig sein muss,
Ewig,—

that is German sentiment of the most unquestionable sort. Not only do the great

names in German history—as Luther, Lessing, Schiller, Bismarck, and so many others—stand in a conspicuous manner for this thoroughly German devotion, this absorption of the individual in some great cause or principle, but countless unnamed men and women are equally typical representatives of this German virtue of self-surrender: the housewife whose only thought is for her family; the craftsman who devotes a lifetime of contented obscurity to his daily work; the scholar who foregoes official and social distinction in unremitting pursuit of his chosen inquiry; the official and the soldier, who sink their personality in unquestioning service to the State.

But a German loves not only to surrender himself to a great cause or a sacred task, he equally loves to surrender himself to whims. He loves to surrender to feelings, to hysterias of all sorts; he loves to merge himself in vague and formless imaginings, in extravagant and reckless ex-

perience, in what he likes to call "living himself out." And thus this same passion for self-surrender which has produced the greatest and noblest types of German earnestness and devotion, has also led to a number of paradoxical excrescences and grotesque distortions of German character. Nobody is more prone to forget his better self in this so-called "living himself out" than the German. Nobody can be a cruder materialist than the German who has persuaded himself that it is his duty to unmask the "lie of idealism." Nobody can be a more relentless destroyer of all that makes life beautiful and lovely, nobody can be a more savage hater of religious beliefs, of popular tradition, of patriotic instincts, than the German who has convinced himself that by the uprooting of all these things he performs the sacred task of saving society.

In literature this whimsical fanaticism of the German temper has made an even

development of artistic tradition, such as is found most conspicuously in France, impossible. Again and again the course of literary development has been interrupted by some bold iconoclast, some unruly rebel against established standards, some impassioned denouncer of what thus far had been considered fine and praiseworthy; so that practically every German writer has had to begin at the beginning, by creating his own standards and canons of style.

No other literature contains so much defamation of its own achievements as German literature; no writers of any other nation have spoken so contemptuously of their own countrymen as German writers of the last hundred years have spoken of theirs, from Hölderlin's characterization of the Germans as "barbarians, made more barbarous by industry, learning, and religion," to some such sayings by Nietzsche as, "Wherever Germany spreads she ruins culture"; or, "Wagner

is the counter-poison to everything essentially German; the fact that he is a poison too I do not deny"; or, "The Germans have not the faintest idea how vulgar they are, they are not even ashamed of being merely Germans"; or, "Words fail me, I have only a look for those who dare to utter the name of Goethe's *Faust* in the presence of Byron's *Manfred;* the Germans are incapable of conceiving anything sublime."

Is there cause for wonder, when Germans themselves indulge in such fanatically scurrilous vagaries about their own people and its greatest men, that foreigners are inclined to take their cue from them and come to the conclusion that German literature is after all "merely German"?

IV

We have considered a number of peculiarly German traits: slowness of temper,

regard for authority, distrust of the average intellect, bent for vague intuitions of the infinite, defective sense of form, passion for self-surrender, whimsical fanaticism; and we have seen how every one of these German traits is diametrically opposed to American ways of thinking and feeling. We cannot therefore be surprised that the literature in which these peculiarly German traits find expression should not be particularly popular in America.

As a matter of fact, there has been only one period, and a brief one at that, when German literature exercised a marked influence upon this country, when it even held something like a dominant position. That was about the middle of the nineteenth century, the time of Emerson, Longfellow, Hedge, and Bayard Taylor. That was the time when the creations of classic German literature of the days of Weimar and Jena were welcomed and exalted by

the leaders of spiritual America as revelations of a higher life, of a new and hopeful and ennobling view of the world.

At that time there did not exist in America, as to-day, millions of citizens of German birth, the great majority of whom are absorbed in practical and every-day affairs. At that time the age of industrialism and imperialism had not dawned for Germany. Germany appeared then to the intellectual élite of America as the home of choicest spirits, as the land of true freedom of thought. *Wilhelm Meister* and *Faust,* Jean Paul's *Titan* and *Flegeljahre,* Fichte's *Destiny of Man,* Schleiermacher's *Addresses on Religion,* were then read and reread with something like sacred ardor by small but influential and highly cultivated circles in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. And the few Germans who at that time came to America, most of them as political refugees and martyrs of the Liberal cause, ap-

peared as living embodiments of the gospel of humanity contained in German literature, and were therefore given a cordial and respectful reception.

Things are very different to-day. To be sure, the noble bronze figures of Goethe and Schiller by Rietschel, which stand in front of the Ducal theater at Weimar, also look down, in the shape of excellent reproductions, upon multitudes of Americans at San Francisco, Cleveland, and Syracuse; and one of the finest monuments to the genius of Goethe ever conceived has recently been dedicated in Chicago. But are these monuments in reality expressions of a wide sway exercised by these two greatest German writers upon the American people? Are they not appeals rather than signs of victory—appeals above all to the Germans in this country to be loyal to the message of classic German literature, to be loyal to the best traditions which bind them to the land of their ancestors, to be

loyal to the ideals in which Germany's true greatness is rooted?

The most encouraging aspect of the present situation is to be found in the study of German literature in American colleges and universities; for there is not a university or a college in the land where there are not well-trained teachers and ardent admirers of what is truly fine and great in German letters. And in spite of all that has been said to-day, there is plenty in the German literary production of the last hundred years which is, or at least should be, of intense interest to Americans,—plenty of wholesome thought, plenty of deep feeling, plenty of soaring imagination, plenty of spiritual treasures which are not for one nation alone, but for all humanity.

For it is a grave mistake to assume, as has been assumed only too often, that, after the great epoch of Classicism and Romanticism in the early decades of the nineteenth century, Germany produced but

little of universal significance, or that, after Goethe and Heine, there were but few Germans worthy to be mentioned side by side with the great writers of other European countries. True, there is no German Tolstoi, no German Ibsen, no German Zola, but then, is there a Russian Nietzsche, or a Norwegian Wagner, or a French Bismarck? Men like these—men of revolutionary genius, men who start new movements and mark new epochs—are necessarily rare, and stand isolated among any people and at all times.

The three names mentioned indicate that Germany, during the last fifty years, has contributed a goodly share of even such men. Quite apart, however, from such men of overshadowing genius and all-controlling power, can it be truly said that Germany, since Goethe's time, has been lacking in writers of high aim and notable attainment?

It can be stated without reservation that,

taken as a whole, the German drama of the nineteenth century has maintained a level of excellence equal if not superior to that reached by the drama of most other nations during the same period. Schiller's *Wallenstein* and *Tell,* Goethe's *Iphigenie* and *Faust,* Kleist's *Prinz von Homburg,* Grillparzer's *Medea,* Hebbel's *Maria Magdalene* and *Die Nibelungen,* Otto Ludwig's *Der Erbförster,* Freytag's *Die Journalisten,* Anzengruber's *Der Meineidbauer,* Wilbrandt's *Der Meister von Palmyra,* Wildenbruch's *König Heinrich,* Sudermann's *Heimat,* Hauptmann's *Die Weber* and *Der arme Heinrich,* Hofmannthal's *Elektra,* and, in addition to all these, the great musical dramas of Richard Wagner—this is a century's record of dramatic achievement of which any nation might be proud. I doubt whether the French or the Russian or the Scandinavian stage of the nineteenth century, as a whole, are above this standard. Certainly, neither the English nor the

Spanish nor the Italian stage come in any way near it.

That German lyric verse of the last hundred years should have been distinguished by beauty of structure, depth of feeling, and wealth of melody, is not to be wondered at if we remember that this was the century of the revival of folk-song, and that it produced such song-composers as Schubert and Schumann and Robert Franz and Hugo Wolf and Richard Strauss. But it seems strange that, apart from Heine, even the greatest of German lyric poets, such as Platen, Lenau, Mörike, Annette von Droste, Geibel, Liliencron, Dehmel, Münchhausen, Rilke, should be so little known beyond the borders of the Fatherland.

The German novel of the past century was, for a long time, unquestionably inferior to both the English and the French novel of the same epoch. But in the midst of much that is tiresome and involved and

artificial, there stand out, even in the middle of the century, such masterpieces of characterization as Otto Ludwig's *Zwischen Himmel und Erde* and Wilhelm Raabe's *Der Hungerpastor;* such delightful revelations of genuine humor as Fritz Reuter's *Ut mine Stromtid;* such penetrating studies of social conditions as Gustav Freytag's *Soll und Haben.* And during the last third of the century there has clearly developed a new, forcible, original style of German novel-writing.

Seldom has the short story been handled more skillfully and felicitously than by such men as Paul Heyse, Gottfried Keller, C. F. Meyer, and Theodor Storm. Seldom has the novel of tragic import and passion been treated with greater refinement and delicacy than in such works as Fontane's *Effi Briest,* Ricarda Huch's *Ludolf Ursleu,* Wilhelm von Polenz's *Der Büttnerbauer,* and Ludwig Thoma's *Andreas Vöst.* And it may be doubted whether, at the present

moment, there is any country where the novel is represented by so many gifted writers or exhibits such exuberant vitality, such sturdy truthfulness, such seriousness of purpose, or such a wide range of imagination, as in contemporary Germany.

It is for the teachers of German literature in the universities and colleges throughout the country to open the eyes of Americans to the vast and solid treasures contained in this storehouse of German literary production of the last hundred years. They are doing this work of enlightenment now, with conspicuous popular success at the universities of the Middle West. And I look confidently forward to a time when, as a result of this academic instruction and propaganda, German literature will have ceased to be unpopular in America.

II

THE TRUE GERMANY

II

THE TRUE GERMANY

I

Much of the criticism of Germany in English and American war literature of the past few months is written in such a vein as to leave the impression that the Germany of to-day is not the real Germany, that it is a perversion of its former self, and that the delivery of the German people from this perverted state and the restoration of the German mind to its earlier and truer type is a demand of humanity, and the real issue of the present war. I have no doubt that most of the persons who hold this view hold it in all seriousness and candor. It therefore seems to me eminently worth while to dis-

cuss it with equal seriousness and candor, to examine the foundations on which it rests, to sift what is true and authentic in it from what is specious and sophisticated, and thus to find out what the real relation is between contemporary Germany and the Germany of a hundred years ago; to determine, in brief, to what extent the contemporary German type has preserved and embodies what by the opponents of Imperial Germany is called the true German type.

I am free to confess that I personally feel more at home in the idyllic atmosphere of the Weimar and Jena of the end of the eighteenth century than in the martial industrialism of the Berlin or Hamburg of the beginning of the twentieth. The classic age of Weimar and Jena was one of those rare epochs in the world's history when spiritual achievements outbalanced the manifestations of material power. Indeed, I doubt whether there ever

was a time in which inner strivings so clearly overshadowed external conditions as in the decades that produced Goethe's *Iphigenie* and *Faust,* or Schiller's *Wallenstein* and *Tell.* Germany was then a country of small towns and villages, a land of prevailingly agricultural pursuits. It had no centralized national government, no national parliament, no national army, no national politics of any sort. On the other hand, there was in the Germany of that time a great deal of provincial and local independence, a great variety of intellectual centers, a great deal of patriarchal dignity and simple refinement in the ordinary conduct of life. The great concern of life was the building up of a well-rounded personality, the rational cultivation of individual talent and character. And the ideal of personality was contained in the threefold message of Kant, Goethe, and Schiller: the exaltation of duty as the only true revelation of the divine, the ex-

altation of restless striving for completeness of existence as the way in which erring man works out his own salvation, and the exaltation of æsthetic culture as a means of reconciling the eternal conflict between the senses and the spirit and of leading man to harmony and oneness with himself.

Noble and inspiring as was this ideal of personality established by the classic epoch of German literature and philosophy, it lacked one essential element of effectiveness: it was nearly devoid of the impulse of national self-assertion. This impulse was added to German life by the dire need of the Napoleonic wars, by the stern necessity of summoning the whole strength of the whole people against the ruin threatened by foreign oppression. It was Napoleonic tyranny which created the German nation.

It would, however, be a great mistake to believe that this new conception of German nationality, which was born out of the political wreck of the old German

Empire at the beginning of the nineteenth century, discarded the high ideal of personality proclaimed by the classic writers of the eighteenth century. On the contrary, the noble triad of ideal incentives of personal conduct bequeathed by them—submission to duty, incessant striving for ever higher activity, and belief in the moral mission of æsthetic culture—was made by their successors the very cornerstone of the new national training upon which the German State of the nineteenth century was to be reared. It might indeed be said that the share taken by these ideals in shaping German public consciousness and in creating German national institutions forms the most important part of German history in the nineteenth century, and has imparted to it many of its most distinctive and characteristic traits. To trace the effect of these ideals upon some at least of the most striking phases of German national life throughout the past hundred

years, is tantamount to proving the presence, in Imperial Germany of to-day, of the same spiritual forces which were the glory of cosmopolitan Germany in the time of Kant, Goethe, and Schiller.

II

It is a trite saying that the Prussian State is a living embodiment and a concrete application, upon a large scale, of Kantian principles of duty. Trite as this saying is, it may not be superfluous to analyze its meaning somewhat more closely. There can be no doubt that it is historically correct in so far as the founders of modern Prussia were, directly or indirectly, disciples of the Kantian philosophy. Not that Kant's views on politics and public affairs did in any specific manner shape Prussian legislation of the early nineteenth century; his views were too individualistic and too little concerned with national needs for

that. Not Kant but the men who followed him—Stein, Hardenberg, Wilhelm von Humboldt, Fichte, and Hegel—have been official exponents, so to speak, of the mission of Prussia for a regenerated Germany. But it is nevertheless true that the spirit of the whole work of legislative reform which brought about the reconstruction of Prussia after the battle of Jena would not have been what it was but for the influence of Kant's thought. "Thou canst, for thou shalt"—these words in which Kant epigrammatically summed up his view of life were indeed the fundamental creed of all those noble men who, in the years following the Prussian débâcle, tried, as Frederick William III said, to help the State "to replace by spiritual agencies what it had lost in physical resources."

The one thought pervading the Stein-Hardenberg legislation from 1807 to 1810 was to release from inertia and set in

motion moral power. By the abolition of serfdom, the mass of the agricultural population was to be converted from a herd of dumb and lifeless subjects into active and spirited workers. By the establishment of municipal self-government throughout Prussia, the cities were to be made a training ground for intelligent and effective participation of the middle classes in public affairs. By the introduction of universal military service, the obligation of every individual of whatever rank or station to prepare to defend with his own life the common cause, was to be made an integral part of the daily existence of the whole people. Stein himself frankly and plainly characterizes the intention of all these legislative measures when in his *Reminiscences* he says, " We started from the fundamental idea of rousing a moral, religious, patriotic spirit in the nation; of inspiring it anew with courage, self-confidence, readiness for every sacrifice in the

cause of independence and of national honor; and of seizing the first favorable opportunity to begin the bloody and hazardous struggle for both." Little as Kant was given to the expression of patriotic emotions, he would surely have recognized the kinship of such utterances as these, and their practical applications, with his own fundamental conviction that man's dignity and freedom consist in the unconditional surrender to duty, and that the aim of society is, not the largest possible gratification of the individual instinct for happiness, but the highest possible expression, in individual activity, of mankind's striving for perfection.

If the political and military reconstruction of Prussia through Stein and Hardenberg may be called an outgrowth of the Kantian conception of moral discipline, the reorganization of higher Prussian education, connected with the names of Wilhelm von Humboldt and Fichte, is clearly based

on similar views. In temper and in intellectual sympathies these men were diametrically opposed to each other: Fichte a radical fire-eater, Humboldt a conservative statesman; Fichte a fanatic spokesman of the Germanic craving for the infinite, Humboldt a placid devotee of Greek beauty of form; Fichte a democratic prophet of Socialism, Humboldt an aristocratic upholder of individual culture. But they were at one in the Kantian belief that the aim of education is the training of the will; they were at one in the conviction that it was the educational mission of the Prussian State to create a new type of national character. The most striking result of the efforts of these men was the foundation of the University of Berlin in the very midst of national humiliation and distress, one of the most shining manifestations of faith in the superiority of ideal aspirations over the tyranny of facts that the world has ever seen. But the founding of the

University of Berlin was only the most striking result of Humboldt's and Fichte's efforts; perhaps even further-reaching, though less conspicuous, was the reorganization of the whole system of public-school instruction throughout Prussia that proceeded from them and their associates. For it was in the first decades of the nineteenth century that Prussia, by combining the democratic ideal of making higher education financially accessible to all classes of society with the aristocratic ideal of stimulating, by careful selection of individuals, the race for intellectual leadership, came to be the foremost organized educational power in Europe. And in the Prussian *Gymnasia* of the early nineteenth century the categorical imperative of Kant's moral law assumed a particularly energetic and life-inspiring form; for here the intellectually finest of the Prussian youth of all classes, the son of the butcher or the seamstress no less than the son of

the prince and the prime minister, met on the common ground of training for the university; here they were imbued, as the youth of no other nation were, with the duty of surrendering themselves to higher motives and of making themselves fit instruments of the spirit. "Work or perish" was the motto chosen for his own guidance by one of the successors of Humboldt in the administration of the Prussian *Gymnasia;* it might be called the motto of the whole Prussian educational policy.

In Hegel's conception of the State this line of moral regeneration that took its start from the Kantian view of duty reached its climax. To Hegel the State is "the realization of the ethical idea; it is the ethical spirit as incarnate, self-conscious, substantial will." The State is to him an organism uniting in itself all spiritual and moral aspirations of the people, stimulating every kind of public and private activity, strain-

ing every nerve and protecting every resource, subordinating all individual comfort to the one great aim of national achievements. It is the source of inspiration for every progress in organization, invention, industrial enterprise, scientific inquiry, philosophical speculation, artistic creation. It is "the manifestation of the divine on earth."

These were the ideas under whose influence generation after generation of the Prussian people, from the beginning of the nineteenth century on, grew up and did their work. These were the ideas which overthrew Napoleon; the ideas which in the thirties and forties, in spite of its overbearing bureaucracy and its reactionary statesmen, made Prussia the only German state from which the political unification of Germany could be looked for; the ideas which in the sixties, under the leadership of such extraordinary men as William I, Bismarck, Moltke, and Lassalle, brought

about, on the one hand, the foundation of the new German Empire, on the other hand the organization of the most compact and the most enlightened labor party of modern history.

We have fallen into the habit of summing up this whole set of ideas under the word efficiency. And efficiency it certainly is which all of Germany has been taught by the Prussian conception of the State. But in applying this word to the Germany of to-day we should not forget that it is efficiency inspired by high ideals, by the Kantian precept of the unconditional submission to duty. Can there be any doubt that the spirit shown by the whole German people in the present war is a wonderful exhibition of strength put into the service of moral commands? I certainly do not wish to belittle the spirit of self-sacrifice manifested by other nations in this war. Who above all could fail to have the deepest sympathy with the Belgian people

in their heroic defense of their homes and hearths? But none of the nations now fighting, I believe, is filled with the same joyous, jubilant exultancy of self-surrender, the same unswerving and undoubting obedience to the inner voice, the same unshakable conviction of fighting for the best that is in them, that the Germans have shown.

Germany in this conflict has had no need of calling for volunteers: two million of them, from boys of eighteen to graybeards of sixty-five, offered themselves spontaneously without a call at the very proclamation of war. Germany has had no need of a spasmodic resort to prohibition legislation; her soldiers and her workmen are disciplined enough to keep in fit condition for the manufacture and the use of arms. Germany has had no need of scouring Asia and Africa for savage hirelings to wage her war: her own sons, thousands of business and professional men, flocked from

all over China to the colors in besieged Kiao-chao, with the absolute certainty of either death or capture, impelled by no other motive than to make good the truly Kantian cablegram sent by the commandant of the fortress to the Emperor: "Guarantee fulfillment of duty to the utmost." In military achievements, can any of the nations that are besetting Germany match her by such examples of trained intelligence, consummate skill, iron determination, persistent daring, unquestioning devotion,—in short such examples of personalities steeled by obedience to the categorical imperative,—as Germany has given in the captain and the crew of the Emden; in the career of the Dresden and the Eitel Friedrich; in the submarines that made their way from the North Sea, through the Straits of Gibraltar, into the Dardanelles; or in that living wall of millions of men that are steadily and relentlessly flinging back the assault upon

her own frontiers by all the great powers of Europe?

I cannot forego quoting from some letters which I have received during the winter from one of these men,—letters which illustrate the spirit ingrained into all Germany by a century of Prussian tradition of character-building. The writer is at the head of one of Germany's foremost publishing houses. Although a man of over sixty, he volunteered at the outbreak of the war, together with his oldest son, a young musician of unusual promise. The son fell in one of the early engagements near Dixmude; the father is captain in a Landsturm regiment holding the trenches around Lille. These are among the things he writes:—

"A friendly fate has after all taken me and my Landsturm battalion into the enemy's country, directly behind the long war front which is gradually being pushed

westward. I had already begun to fear that I would be kept all the time in guarding prisoners' camps, which, easy as the service is, would have come to be intolerably tedious in the long run. Happily, my wife has stood the double leave-taking better than I feared. The night before Heinrich's [the son's] departure, she sat all night long at his bed, he peacefully sleeping with his hand lying in hers and only from time to time awakening for a moment to feel the comfort of being thus guarded. 'As a mother comforteth'—the scripture says. When at five o'clock in the morning he had left her with the words, 'You are a wonder of a mother,' and she was sitting alone in the dining-room sobbing, suddenly a little angel in a night-gown [the youngest boy] came downstairs and put his hand in hers, reminding her of what was still left to her.

"'Volunteer R. missing since November 10,' is a wireless message from the

234th regiment that reached me yesterday, after my wife and I for a fortnight had been worried by the absence of all news, and later had been startled by postal cards addressed to the boy being returned, with the official mark, 'wounded.' When or whether we shall ever hear anything definite about his fate is doubtful. What alarms me most is my poor wife. God give her trust and strength. I myself shall pull through; the constant duties of the day, the intercourse with comrades, and horseback riding will help me. And happily, my wife and I find the same well of comfort in the Word of God, which one *lives* in these days as never before, without any dogmatic doubts. And how can we ask anything special for ourselves, when each and all make such sacrifices for the Fatherland? These sacrifices will not be in vain.'

"Since yesterday I know that I shall not see Heinrich again. What this means for us, I need not tell you. I had labored

and labored to make my heart firm, but that the blow would be so terrific, so crushing, I had not imagined. My wife thus far has struggled through heroically, in the clear consciousness that she must save herself for our youngest and me, so far as it is in her power. If the same feeling did not uphold me, I would, in spite of my age and my poor hearing, apply to be transferred to the first line. We cannot understand the sufferings which now are heaped upon us and countless others. The only help is to go on with our tasks. Christmas time will give my wife plenty of opportunity to show love to others and thereby to combat the void at her own hearth.

"The day before yesterday, since I could not get any definite news, I rode about sixty kilometers northward into Flanders. That I could do it I owe to special circumstances. What would happen if the roads, crowded with troops as they are, and the precious motor cars, were

often used thus for the sake of a poor common soldier? After some searching about, I at last found Heinrich's company, shrunk from 250 to 90, quartered in a little church at West Roosebecke, the tower of which had been demolished in order not to attract the fire of the enemy near by. Soon I was surrounded by a crowd of young men who had taken part in the last battle together with Heinrich. He had been among the skirmishers in front of the storming company, they said. Close before the enemy's line, he was shot through the left arm, tried to creep back, was shot in the back, fell over, and was left dead on the ground, next to his friend and classmate K. Since the French shoot even at men burying the dead, they could not bury him. A few days before, Heinrich himself had rescued a wounded comrade who had crept into a baking-oven directly in front of the enemy's position. They said he had been more spirited and exuberant

and joyous in the performance of his duties than most of his comrades. What could he have been to them in the long evenings, as they were huddled together in that little church?

"Of war-weariness or discouragement there is not a shadow of a trace among us. Detachments of the recruits of 1914 have just arrived here, to finish their drill in the enemy's country. They are singing, singing, singing, wherever you meet them, just like the volunteers of last August of whom so many are now sleeping underground. My heart grows tender when I talk with them or look at them while I ride past them. Our opponents have no conception of what stuff our people is made."

III

By the side of Kant's stern doctrine of duty there must be placed, as another of the great legacies left to Germany by her

classic writers, the Goethean gospel of salvation through ceaseless striving. It is Goethe who has impressed upon German life the Superman motif. As his own life was a combination of *Wilhelm Meister* and *Faust* in their undaunted striding from experience to experience and in their ever-renewed efforts to round out their own being, so it may be said that there is something Faustlike and something Meisterlike in most of the representative men of German literature in the nineteenth century, above all in Heinrich von Kleist, Hebbel, Otto Ludwig, Richard Wagner, Nietzsche. None of these men were religious formalists; to all of them life was an experiment of deepest import; all of them found the value of life in wrestling with its fundamental problems. And this whole tradition of striving has imparted even to the average German of to-day a mental strenuousness and an emotional intensity such as is absent from the average

European of other stock, not to mention the average American. A strange spectacle indeed, and an inspiring one: a people naturally slow and of phlegmatic temper stirred to its depths by intellectual and spiritual forces and thereby keyed up to an eagerness and swiftness of action which gives it easily the first place in the race for national self-improvement. What other people equals the German in the readiness to react upon stimuli from abroad, to adopt and incorporate ideas grown on foreign soil? Where have Sophocles, Dante, Shakespeare, Calderón, Ibsen exerted as truly popular and deeply penetrating an influence as in Germany? Where have they become educational forces of equal momentum? Is there any other country where the knowledge of foreign languages is so widely spread? any other country where there is so much individual desire for solid learning? any other country where individual talent is as carefully

and conscientiously cultivated? any other country where there is so much honest and serious effort to approach the great questions of existence from an individual angle, to restate them in personal terms, to find new answers and new vistas?

American students who have lived in German families of the middle classes, for instance the family of a *Gymnasiallehrer* or a government official, will bear testimony to the fact that German daily life of to-day in all these respects upholds the Goethean tradition of a hundred years ago. Indeed, the reign of the present Emperor has given particularly conspicuous evidence of this spirit of striving and effort penetrating all departments of life. For what sphere of activity is there in which the Emperor's example, his universal and impassioned impulse for achievement, has not borne fruit? Only one of these fruits, matured in the midst of the present war, may be singled out. In October, 1914,

there was formally opened, with simple ceremonies, the new University of Frankfurt, the first German university to be founded by an individual city. Well may the professors and students of this latest German university be proud of the date of its birth. For it will proclaim to posterity that not even the most fearful crisis that ever befell a people has been able to crush the German striving for ideal achievements, the Faustlike determination to make every new experience a stepping-stone for a higher one, and thus to press on to completeness of existence.

Together with Kant and Goethe, Schiller stands as guardian of the best that the German people has contributed to human progress in the nineteenth century. To him more than to any other individual is it due that the German people believes as no other people believes in the moral mission of æsthetic culture. Schiller's whole activity was rooted in the conviction that beauty is

the great reconciler, that not only in the creation of the beautiful, but also in its enjoyment, man overcomes the conflict between his sensuous and his spiritual nature, becomes at one with himself, rises to his full stature. This conviction, consciously embraced by the educated, instinctively absorbed by the masses, has come to be one of the great popular forces that have molded German national character in the nineteenth century and distinguished it from the emotional life of most other peoples.

To the German, the drama is a sacred matter. He looks to it for inspiration, widening of sympathies, upheaval of emotions, cleansing of purpose, strengthening of the will. From Schiller on to Hauptmann and Schönherr, generation after generation of German dramatic writers has tried to live up to this ideal, not always with full artistic success, always with nobility of aim. Anyone who has attended the annual performances at Weimar, ar-

ranged by the Schillerbund for the flower of German youth from all over the empire, will know something of the effect which this view of the drama has exercised upon the German people. Even now, in the midst of the war, when in London the serious stage has given way to the noisy and sensational vaudeville show, the German theaters in all cities, large and small maintain and emphasize the classic tradition and add their share to the ennobling of national character.[1]

To the German, music is a sacred matter. Who could describe what Beethoven and Schubert and Schumann and Wagner have been to the German people throughout these past hundred years? Who could

[1] Germans may be justly proud of the fact that at the very time when the British navy has been trying to shut off Germany from the rest of the world, Germany has not only kept all her important theaters regularly open to Shakespearean plays, but has even exported Shakespeare across the Baltic: Max Reinhardt and his Deutsches Theater have been playing *Hamlet* and *Lear* during the present summer to crowded audiences at Stockholm and other Swedish cities.

measure the wealth of comfort, delight, strength, elevation, which song—song giving wings to the feelings of an Uhland, Eichendorff, Heine, Lenau, Geibel—has showered upon countless German homes? And Beethoven as well as folk-song, have accompanied the German nation into the war. Not a catchy and meaningless music-hall tune is what the German soldiers love to sing in the trenches, but "Es braust ein Ruf wie Donnerhall," or "In der Heimat, in der Heimat—da gibt's ein Wiedersehn!"

To the German, the enjoyment of nature is a sacred matter. A short time before his death, in his eightieth year, Ludwig Tieck declared that the greatest event in his whole life, the event which had influenced and shaped his character more than any other, had been a sunrise which he had watched as a youth of eighteen when he was tramping in the Thuringian mountains. That is German sentiment. That is what millions

of Germans feel to-day. That is what makes the flowerpots bloom behind the windowpanes—kept so scrupulously clean —of German tenement houses; what has transformed the public squares of German cities into parks and meadows; what makes Whitsuntide, with its joyful roaming through field and forest, with its bedecking of all houses with the young foliage, the most charming of all German holidays. That is what made the "field-gray" of the German troops marching into war last August disappear under such masses of roses as if all the German gardens had emptied themselves upon them.

No, the Germany of to-day is not a perversion of a former and better type. It is a normal and splendid outgrowth of national ideals that have been at work for more than a century,—the ideals of training the will, of stimulating energy, and of cultivating the soul. To give once more concrete illustrations of the type of

personality developed under the influence of these ideals, I quote again from some letters that I received at the beginning of this year. This is from a widow living near Lake Constance, whose eldest son, a young Uhlan who volunteered fresh from the *Gymnasium,* had come home on furlough for the Christmas holidays:—

"On the twenty-fourth I rode to Constance to fetch our Christmas surprise, our dear tall Uhlan who was allowed to spend three whole days with us. It was a wonderful time for us. The children dragged him about everywhere, from the cellar to the attic, from the garden into the field. It was a joy to see him playing for them gay riders' songs on the piano, whistling tunes to the guitar, etc. But he has grown very serious. A veil lies over his youthful face; and there is something touchingly protecting in the way in which he behaves toward the children. His features in re-

pose are strangely sad; and strangely mature he seems when he talked, so reservedly and yet so understandingly, with a neighbor who had just heard of the death of his only son. There were three steamers full of reservists when, on the third day, I accompanied him across the lake. Some fifty people were at the pier and waved good-by. A young lad next to us on the steamer, who had kept up waving back a long time, broke into despairing sobs when his aged mother vanished out of sight. But they all spoke firmly and with wonderful elevation about our beloved Fatherland. It helped me to keep myself in hand. And now—as God wills."

The next is from a young minister who studied at the Harvard Divinity School last year and who, on the day of his return to Germany, volunteered as a private. His three brothers were also in the field; two of them have since been killed. He

was struck by a shell while carrying a wounded officer out of the firing line. The following words are from a letter written in the hospital on the day of his death:—

"Depression of spirit I battle down with good weapons and good success. Anxious thought about my brothers makes me almost glad not to have any news from home. How long will it last? One must reach out for the great things."

And this is from a young artillery officer, by profession a chemical expert in one of the great German industrial laboratories, who writes from the trenches at Ypres:—

"After a magnificent sunset, we were called to the Christmas service. It was held in a barn; the walls covered with fir branches; torches and candles the only form of lighting; a curious mixture of the real stall of Bethlehem and our traditional

Christmas. The chaplain spoke simply and nicely: Christmas should bring inner peace to us, even in the field, and make our whole army feel as one great family.

"Then our captain made an inspiring and patriotic address, with cheers for the Emperor, winding up with the distribution of some iron crosses, one of them falling to my lot. And finally the opening of the packages from home. What an infinite love these numberless presents revealed; how they made us feel that the soul of Germany is with us in the fight! During the night—it was a still, clear, frosty night—we sent our improvised band into the trench nearest the French and had it play to them Christmas songs and marches. One really must guard one's self against sentimentality in these times. But this, I think, is true—that the war has created a mutual respect between the fighting peoples; and upon the basis of this mutual respect there may perhaps arise a more solid coöperation of

nations than the friends of eternal peace have thus far been able to bring about."

IV

How is it possible that a people animated by such a spirit, a people which for a century has assiduously and devotedly labored to produce types of human personality as noble and enlightened as any people ever has brought forth—how is it possible that such a people should suddenly appear to large numbers of intelligent observers as an enemy of mankind, as a menace to the security and peace of the rest of the world? Much of the hostile criticism of Imperial Germany, of its alleged sinister craving for world-dominion, or its atrocious conduct of the war, is outright slander and willful distortion. It is indeed a grim mockery to have the tentative and circumscribed efforts made by Germany during the past twenty-five years

for colonial expansion denounced by the enemies of Germany as dangerous and intolerable aggression, when one remembers that during these same years England throttled the independence of the South African republics, established a protectorate over Egypt, partitioned Persia—together with Russia—into "spheres of influence," encouraged France to build up an immense colonial empire in Cochin China, Madagascar, Tunis, and Morocco, allowed Italy to conquer Tripoli, and helped Japan to tighten her grip upon China. As to the manner of the German conduct of war, here also a huge mass of extraordinary exaggerations and a vast amount of anonymous aspersions have been indulged in. For the rest, these accusations find their explanation in the fact that Germany thus far has, in the main, been able to ward off the enemy from her own soil and to transfer the deadly work of destruction into the enemy's country.

And yet, there is a residuum of truth in the assertion that Germany during the last generation has overreached herself. So far as this is the case, she bears her part of the guilt of having conjured up the present world calamity. In saying this, I am not thinking of Germany's consistent policy of formidable armament; for I fail to see how Germany could have afforded not to prepare for war, so long as she found herself surrounded by neighbors every one of them anxious to curb her rising power. What I am thinking of is a spirit of superciliousness which, as a very natural concomitant of a century of extraordinary achievement, has developed, especially during the last twenty-five years, in the ruling classes of Germany.

The manifestations of this spirit have been many and varied. In German domestic conditions, it has led to the growth of a capitalistic class as snobbish and overbearing as it is resourceful and intelligent,

counteracting by its uncompromising *Herrenmoral* the good effect of the wise and provident social legislation inaugurated by Bismarck. It has led to excesses of military rule and to assertions of autocratic power which have embittered German party politics and have driven large numbers of Liberal voters into the Socialist ranks, as the only party consistently and unswervingly upholding Parliamentary rights. In Germany's foreign relations, it has led to a policy which was meant to be firm but had an appearance of arrogance and aggressiveness and easily aroused suspicion. Suspicion of Germany led to her isolation. And her isolation has finally brought on the war.

It should, however, be said that these excesses of German vitality, so skillfully used by anti-German writers to discredit Germany's position in the present conflict, have not, as is asserted, been a serious danger to the rest of the world. Rather

have they been an element of weakness to Germany herself. They are not essentially different from the spirit of haughty masterfulness that characterized English foreign policies and English insular self-sufficiency throughout the larger part of the nineteenth century; or from the French belief in the superiority of France in all matters of higher civilization; or even from the American assumption that the United States is the foremost standard-bearer of international justice and righteousness. They are an impressive instance of that tragic national self-overestimation which seems to be inseparable from periods of striking national ascendency, both quickening and endangering this ascendency itself.

Let us hope that this tragic situation—the catastrophe of greatness, induced, partly at least, through the faults of its virtues—will have a solution worthy of the noble ideals that sustained Germany's up-

ward flight. Let us hope that it will lead to the purging, purifying, and strengthening of German greatness through this fearful trial. A letter received recently from a German judge, now fighting as lieutenant on the Russian frontier, points to such a hope. He writes: "The conduct of our men in this war is beyond all praise. Whatever may be the outcome of the war, the German people is bound to gain by it in inner strength. All classes have come to know what they are to each other, and we confidently trust that they will never forget it. The party strife thus far waged with venom and hatred will give way to a generous and objective discussion of honestly conflicting opinions, and the ideal of constructive social work will be more fully grasped and more devotedly pursued than ever before. To us in the field, that will be the best reward."

Whether these hopes of the future are ever fulfilled in their totality or not, our

survey of the past and the present of Germany has, I trust, made it clear that the German people of to-day is not, as its enemies declare, a degenerate perversion of a former and nobler type. On the contrary, with all its defects and excrescences of temper, it is a splendid outgrowth of a century's training in the national application of those ideals which distinguished the classic period of German literature and philosophy: unconditional submission to duty, unremitting endeavor for intellectual advance, assiduous cultivation of the things that give joy to the soul. A people that believes in these ideals cannot be lost.

III

GERMANY'S CONTRIBUTION TO CIVILIZATION

III

GERMANY'S CONTRIBUTION TO CIVILIZATION

I

ONE of the saddest effects of the present war has been the mania of international aspersion and belittlement engendered by it. Germany, in particular, has been treated by her opponents to vilifications so fanatic and hysterical that they can arouse only astonishment and pity. According to these critics there is hardly a single national achievement of the highest rank to which Germany could justly lay claim. German statesmanship is brutal and insolent, German scholarship is heavy and mechanical, German science is uninventive and unoriginal, German academic freedom

is a catch-word without substantial meaning, German literature is mediocre and formless, German sculpture and architecture are crude and barbaric, German painting is a clumsy copy of French models, the greatest German composer, Beethoven, was a Belgian, Nietzsche, the greatest German thinker of the last generation, was a Slav—these are a few strains from the voluminous chorus of detraction and misrepresentation which ignorance or malice or both during the last twelvemonth have hurled against a country which, until the beginning of the war, appeared to most of the world as an embodiment of high intellectual striving, spiritual uprightness, imaginative power, and civic virtue.

I shall refrain from answering such attacks either by counter-accusations directed against what other nations have produced or by the glorification of individual German achievements. The former would be incompatible with the German respect for

national contributions to the common stock of the world's possessions from whatever country they may come. The latter would be unprofitable and unconvincing. For however good a case I might be able to make out for Goethe or Beethoven or Hegel or Helmholtz or Mommsen or Wagner or Bismarck, there would always be some obdurate persons left who would insist that the countries with which Germany is at war had an equal or even larger number of great names to offer indicative of their contributions to modern civilization, although I personally doubt whether such a trio as Goethe, Beethoven, and Wagner has been produced by any other country during the last century and a half.

The fact is, the greatest men in all departments of human activity are detached from national limitations. They stand by themselves. And although the number of such men in a given nation is undoubtedly an index of that nation's ability to con-

tribute to the progress of humanity, yet a nation's peculiar contribution to civilization consists not so much in producing such men of transcending and universal genius as in accustoming masses of men to a definite, nationally determined habit of feeling, thinking, and acting. The supreme achievements of great individuals,—inventions, discoveries, systems of philosophy, works of art—are the common property of mankind. The invention of the printing press, the discovery of the law of gravitation, the theory of evolution, the *Divine Comedy, Hamlet, Faust,* although they sprang from representatives of different nationalities do not themselves represent something pre-eminently national; they are contributions by Germans, Englishmen, Italians, rather than by the German, English, or Italian nation. What a nation, as nation, contributes to civilization, is its own collective type, the type of personality which it creates in the millions of people

belonging to it, the standards of life to which the masses of its constituents subscribe. The question, then, "What is Germany's contribution to civilization?" resolves itself into the further question, "What are the peculiar standards of feeling, thinking, and acting which the rank and file of Germans acknowledge as their own?" This is the question which I shall try to answer.

II

The most fundamental phenomenon bearing upon this question is a strange antithesis of qualities, or rather a combination of two extremes in the German character. On the one hand, the German more earnestly than most other occidentals insists upon the sacredness of personality in all matters pertaining to private life. The German dislikes regulation of his domestic existence by society conventions, he wishes to shape his daily conduct in the freedom

and naturalness of his family surroundings, he resents interference with his holiday recreation by the church, he loves to follow his own intellectual bent, he prizes above everything every honest effort for individual self-improvement. On the other hand, the German more willingly than all other Europeans submits to the authority of the State in all public matters. It is a matter of course with him that public safety and public order demand constant self-denial and self-discipline from the individual citizen. Grumblingly perhaps, but none the less readily, he complies with all sorts of irksome police regulations, because he understands their necessity. Cheerfully, often joyfully, he sacrifices part of his best years to service in arms for the State, and he bears the taxes necessary for army purposes without thought of evasion. It is a self-evident axiom for him that a public office is a public trust and it does not occur to him that it might be used for private

gain. Public welfare is indeed to him the highest law.

It is easy to see the historical basis for this double quality of the modern German character. The beginning of modern Germany, the Protestant Reformation, was an outcry for freedom of the inner life. The soul struggles of one great individual, Luther, found a response in the soul of the nation and stirred it to mighty strivings for individual salvation through personal communion with the divine. But the Reformation of the sixteenth century did not succeed in making Germany a nation of freemen. On the contrary, the civic disorders and civil wars aroused by it led in the long run to the destruction of all popular liberty and to the establishment of the most unrelenting princely absolutism. In the struggle against this absolutism of the seventeenth century, the innermost principle of the Reformation, the faith in spiritual freedom, came to life again.

Pietism and Rationalism, Nature Worship and Sentimentalism and Storm and Stress Revolt worked together to raise the downtrodden individuals to a new conception of human dignity and ideal aspirations and thus ushered in that classic era of noblest personal refinement when Kant discovered in the inner voice the only sure revelation of the divine, when Schiller pointed to beauty as the great reconciler between the sensuous and the spiritual nature of man, and when Goethe found the hope of salvation in the restless striving for culture. But this age of highest personal refinement, of moral freedom, and æsthetic culture had weakened Germany's power to resist attacks from without. The classic era of German literature and philosophy coincided with the breakdown of the old German Empire and the subjugation of the German people by Napoleon. From this catastrophe Germany was saved through the ideal of public obligation and solidarity

embodied in the Prussian monarchy. By summoning all her powers—physical, intellectual, spiritual—against the ruin threatened by foreign dominion, Germany, under Prussian leadership, once more rose to political greatness. A new and exalted conception of the State,—a State uniting in itself all ideal aspirations of the people, making national progress, culture, and achievement the supreme goal of individual exertion—inspired the best Germans throughout the nineteenth century and finally led to the foundation of the new Empire and to the recent epoch of German prominence among the nations of Europe which, we hope, has not come to an end with the present world war.

Here, then, we have four centuries of German history in which the desire for freedom and fullness of the inner life was the propelling force in all upward movements resting on popular initiative—in the Reformation, in the spread of religious

toleration after the Thirty Years' War, in the intellectual reconstruction from Leibniz to Lessing, in the classic era of Weimar and Jena;—while the political regeneration in the main came from above, appeared as a demand of public necessity, was forced upon the people by authority, and only gradually came to terms and finally to a close union with the demands of individual liberty.

Fullness of the inner life in every German, sense of public responsibility and solidarity in all Germans—these ideals of conduct seem to me the natural outcome of German history since Luther. They also seem to me the greatest contribution made by Germany to civilization. Let us consider both sides of this contribution somewhat more closely.

III

Trust in the supreme value of the inner life is probably the deepest strain of Ger-

man character, and it is impossible to do justice to this trait in a brief analysis. Four of its manifestations, however, are, I believe, of particular significance: the German contempt for appearances, the German delight in small things, the German sense of the spiritual oneness of all things, and the German loyalty to principle, or disdain of intellectual compromises.[1]

Deutsches Herz, verzage nicht,
Tu was dein Gewissen spricht.
Baue nicht auf bunten Schein,
Lug und Trug ist dir zu fein.
Schlecht gerät dir List und Kunst,
Feinheit wird dir eitel Dunst[2]—

[1] In the discussion of the four manifestations of German "Innerlichkeit" which follows here, I have taken the liberty of repeating some things said in my essay on "Emerson and German Personality," *German Ideals of To-day*, pp. 97 ff.

[2] German heart, do not despair,
Do as conscience bids thee dare.
Build not on deceiving show,
Tricks and lies thou dost not know.
Cunning prospers ill with thee,
Vain to thee is subtlety.

these words of Ernst Moriz Arndt's stir a true German to his innermost depth. And although it must be admitted that in this German contempt for appearances there is often hidden a good deal of that supercilious self-righteousness which Goethe's *Baccalaureus* expresses so naïvely by saying

Im Deutschen lügt man, wenn man höflich ist,[1]

yet a nation may be justly proud of such a fundamental dislike of superficialities in the great mass of its members. Foreigners have often willingly acknowledged this German trait; none perhaps more understandingly than Emerson in his characterization of German literature. "What distinguishes Goethe," he says, "for French and English readers is a property which he shares with his nation,—an habitual reference to interior truth. The German intellect wants the French sprightliness,

[1] One lies in German if one is polite.

the fine, practical understanding of the English, and the American adventure; but it has a certain probity, which never rests in a superficial performance, but asks steadily: *to what end?* A German public asks for a controlling sincerity. There must be a man behind the book, a personality which by birth and quality is pledged to the doctrines there set forth. If he cannot rightly express himself to-day, the same things subsist and will open themselves to-morrow. There lies the burden on his mind,—the burden of truth to be declared,—more or less understood; and it constitutes his business and calling in the world to see those facts through, and to make them known. What signifies it that he trips and stammers; that his voice is harsh and hissing; that his methods or his hopes are inadequate? That message will find method and imagery; articulation and melody. Though he were dumb, it would speak."

I cannot conceal my belief that the enormous material expansion of modern Germany has reacted unfavorably upon this traditional and sterling aversion to sham in the German character. Indeed, not a little of recent German production in the drama, in the novel, in historical literature, in sculpture, and painting, is conspicuous for a certain shallow brilliancy and for cultivation of technique at the expense of inner truthfulness. But I trust that one effect of this terrible war will be to sweep away all this flimsy cleverness of the smart cliques and to bring out once more in its full power the deep fervor of the German people for the untarnished and undisguised essence of things. Nothing better has Germany given to the world than this passion for truth.

Closely allied with the German contempt for appearances is the often praised delight of the Germans in small things. He who knows how to enter lovingly into

what is outwardly inconspicuous and seemingly insignificant, he who is accustomed to look for fullness of the inner life even in the humblest and most circumscribed spheres of society, to him new worlds will reveal themselves in regions where the hasty, dissatisfied glance discovers nothing but empty space. "Man upon this earth," says Jean Paul, "would be vanity and hollowness, dust and ashes, vapor and a bubble,—were it not for the fact that he feels himself to be so. That it is possible for him to harbor such a feeling, *this,* by implying a comparison of himself with something higher in himself, this it is which makes him the immortal creature that he is." Here we have the root of that German love for still life, that German capacity for discovering the great in the little, which has given to our literature such lovable characters as Jean Paul's own *Quintus Fixlein,* Wilhelm Raabe's *Hungerpastor,* Heinrich Seidel's *Leberecht Hühn-*

chen, or the sturdy company of Rosegger's Styrian Highlanders. And even to-day this tenderness for the humble and lowly makes Germany the land of all lands where in the midst of the bewildering tumult of industrial strife and social competition there are to be found hundreds upon hundreds of men firmly determined to resist the mad desire for what is called success, perfectly content to live in a corner, unobserved but observing, at home with themselves, wedded to some task, some ideal which, however little it may have to do with the pretentious and noisy world about them, fills their soul and sheds dignity upon their lives.

The danger of this state of mind is that it may lead to political quietism and to an over-readiness to accept the decisions of superior authority in public affairs. That this danger exists in Germany cannot be doubted, especially among petty officials, small tradespeople, artisans, in so far as

they are not affected by socialistic ideas, and also in wide circles of the moderately well-to-do. But even so, if we were asked the question, which country contributed more to civilization: a country where the great mass of the population are politically alive, conscious of their rights and ready to assert them, but without joyfulness in their daily tasks and chafing at the restrictions of their private existence, or a country where the prevailing spirit of the people is not that of political restlessness, but of contented respectability and the consciousness of a man's inner worth, however modest the external surroundings of the individual may be,—the answer would not be difficult. Germany, in the main, still belongs to the latter type.

The natural counterpart to a high appreciation of seemingly small and insignificant things is a strongly developed sense for the spiritual unity of *all* things, a strongly developed consciousness of the

supremacy of the infinite whole of which all individual beings are only parts, a divining perception of the spirituality of the universe. Am I wrong in saying that this, too, is a pre-eminently German state of mind?

How deeply German mysticism of the Middle Ages had drawn from this well of the Infinite, how strongly it had imbued even the popular mind with the idea of the absorption of the individual in the divine spirit, may be illustrated by an anecdote of the fourteenth century attached to the name of the great preacher and mystic thinker, John Tauler. It is said that at the time when Tauler was at the height of his fame and popularity in Strassburg, one day a simple layman came to him and frankly told him that in spite of all his sacred learning and his fine sermons he was further removed from the knowledge of God than many an unlettered man of the people. Upon the advice of the layman,—so the story runs—Tauler now with-

drew from the world, gave away his books, refrained from preaching, and devoted himself in solitude to prayerful contemplation. Not until two years later did he dare to ascend the pulpit again. But when he attempted to speak his words failed him. Under the scorn and derision of the congregation he was forced to leave the church, and was now considered by everybody a perverted fool. But in this very crisis he discovered the Infinite within himself, the very contempt of the world filled him with the assurance of his nearness to God, the spirit came over him, his tongue loosened as of its own accord, and he suddenly found himself possessed by a power of speech that stirred and swayed the whole city as no preacher ever had swayed it before.

This story of the fourteenth century may be called a symbolic and instinctive anticipation of the well-defined philosophic belief in the spiritual oneness of the universe,

which was held by all the great German thinkers and poets of the classic and romantic period. Goethe, Schiller, Novalis, Tieck, Jean Paul, Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, however much they differed in temper and specific aims, all agreed in this, that the whole visible manifold world was to them the expression of the same infinite personality, the multiform embodiment of one universal mind. And they all saw the crowning glory and divinity of man in his capacity to feel this unity of the world, to hear the voice of the world spirit within his own self, to be assured of its eternity in spite of the constant change and decay of visible forms.

Was kann der Mensch im Leben mehr gewinnen
Als dass sich Gott-Natur ihm offenbare,
Wie sie das Feste lässt zu Geist zerrinnen,
Wie sie das Geisterzeugte fest bewahre—[1]

[1] What more in life can mortal man accomplish
Than that God-Nature be to him unfolded,
How what is firm to spirit it dissolveth,
How what is spirit-born it firmly keepeth.

these words of Goethe's express, I believe, the creed of the majority of Germans whether they are Catholics or Protestants or agnostics. It is a creed all the more firmly held and of all the more general application since it has sprung from within and is not a formula imposed from without.

As the fourth, and last, evidence of the German trust in the supremacy of the inner life I have mentioned loyalty to principle and disdain of intellectual compromises. I am not unaware of the fact that some of the most serious defects of German life are connected with this national trait: the bitterness of political party strife; the acrimoniousness and lack of urbanity in scientific discussions; the lack of mutual understanding so frequently found between father and son, between the older and the younger generation in general; the often ill-disguised enmity between pupil and teacher, between servant and master,

between the classes and the masses. The best men in Germany to-day hope that the war will blot out these defects, that its great lesson of fraternal feeling will continue to be a bridge between what used to be contending factions. May this hope be amply fulfilled. Meanwhile it should be said that this habitual insistence on principle, disdainful of compromises, regardless of consequences, has been one of the most powerful propelling agencies in German intellectual advance. The eagerness and virility of German university life is largely due to this habit of the German professor of identifying himself unreservedly with the cause for which he stands. If the German professor has been humorously defined as "a man who thinks otherwise," we should not forget that this controversial state of mind represents more than mere quarrelsomeness or the desire to have the last word. It also represents intellectual courage and disregard of one's own advan-

tages in matters of general import; and it has made German university men in a conspicuous manner leaders of public opinion and champions of freedom of thought. A country which has produced such sturdy controversialists as Luther, Lessing, Fichte, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, may indeed be said to have fought a good fight for the spiritual cause of mankind.

IV

We have in the foregoing briefly considered what may be called the sum of Germany's individual contributions to civilization. Let us now take a glance at what may be designated as her public contribution.

The whole of German life acquired a new meaning and received a higher impetus at the beginning of the nineteenth century when, under the stress of national calamity, a new ideal of the State was born. This

ideal rests upon the fundamental conviction that the State is not only a protector of vested rights, not only a guardian of public safety and of social conditions that make for individual happiness, but that it is pre-eminently a moral agency superior to society, and that its principal mission is to raise the individuals that make up society to a higher level of public consciousness and energy.

No doubt there never was a conception of the State among any people from which this moral and disciplinary view was entirely absent. But not since Plato's time has this view anywhere been a national force as truly vital and all-embracing as it has come to be in modern Prussia and Germany. It has imbued the whole German people, as no other people is imbued, with the spirit of national service and national achievement. The modern German mind instinctively refuses to accept any of the thousand and one private activities that

constitute the daily life of a people as something really private and isolated. The farmer and the miner, the factory hand and the sailor, the business man and the preacher, the scholar and the artist,—they are all soldiers, soldiers for German greatness and progress; and their spheres of activity, far apart as they seem from each other, are in reality on one and the same level, the level of the fight for making Germany in every way—politically, economically, intellectually, and morally—a self-supporting, self-relying, conspicuously healthy and conspicuously productive national organism.

To call such views of the State a disguise of despotism seems to me doing violence to the English language. For how can there be despotism in a State, where all classes acknowledge public service as the highest law. Besides, it is a well-known fact that, owing to the multiplicity of sovereign German states within the Em-

pire, each one with its own executive and legislature, and owing to the exceptionally high development of municipal self-government in Germany, there is more of habitual, organized popular scrutiny of governmental acts in Germany than in England, France, or Italy—quite apart from the Reichstag's being based upon universal manhood suffrage. But on the other hand, it is clear that a State concentrating all the energies of the people upon the one aim of national achievement, is bound to make continuity of administrative policy the very cornerstone of its governmental system. Hence the importance attached in the German theory of the State to an executive standing above parties, an executive body consisting of the most highly trained experts in their several departments, representing the most enlightened and most objective opinion upon public conditions and needs, working now with this now with that combination of parlia-

mentary groups, but not pledged to any one of them, and subject in its tenure of office only to the crown, and not to changing parliamentary majorities.

No unprejudiced observer of contemporary European affairs can fail to see the inspiring effect which this ideal of the State has had upon modern Germany. The type of modern Germany is not, as has been said by hostile critics, that of a huge, soulless machine, but of free energy controlled by a common aim. Germany during the last fifty years has excelled most other countries in eagerness and momentum of private initiative. The German schoolboy is more eager to learn; the German university student is more firmly set upon independent research; the German workman has a higher level of average intelligence; the German farmer is more scientific in the cultivation of his soil; the German manufacturer is more ready to introduce new methods of production; the German

business man is more active in finding new outlets for his wares; the German city administrator is more keenly alive to civic improvements; the German army and navy officer is more fully abreast with every new experiment or device of military tactics; the majority of all Germans are keyed up to a more intense, a more swiftly pulsating manner of life, appear more alert and wide awake, more strongly bent upon self-improvement than is the case in most, if not all, the nations with which Germany is now at war. All this intensity of private initiative, I believe, is largely due to the impelling force exerted upon the individual by the exalted views instinctively held by all Germans regarding the mission and the functions of the State.

But the crowning test of the German conception of the State has been afforded by the present war. For a year and a half all Germany has been one vast beleaguered fortress. For a year and a half she has

been cut off from nearly the whole world. Her merchant marine has been swept off the ocean. Her export trade has been completely stopped and her import trade nearly so. For a year and a half she has had to rely upon her own resources, in men, in food, in equipment, in armament; while nearly all the great military powers of the earth have been together pressing against her and the greatest of the neutral nations—the republics of North and South America—have been furnishing her foes with vast quantities of war material, money, foodstuffs, and other supplies.

In the face of all this, Germany has mobilized and brought into play her economic, military, intellectual, and moral forces in so extraordinary a manner that she has not only been able to hold the whole world at bay, but seems in a fair way of forcing her antagonists, so vastly superior in numbers and resources, to some kind of compromise which will assure a

legitimate outlet for her teeming population and her superior mental vitality.

The economic and industrial adaptation of Germany to the needs of the war has indeed been something marvelous, by far exceeding even the boldest expectations.

The most trenchant and far-reaching economic measures—such as the sequestration by the government of the whole wheat crop, the regulation of the bread consumption of the whole population by an elaborate card system, the limitation of meat consumption and even of the use of fats for cooking purposes to certain days of the week, the establishment of maximum prices for a variety of foodstuffs—all these measures, affecting deeply the daily life and the fundamental needs of 68,000,000 people, have been carried out with an ease and a lack of friction as though they concerned only the superfluities and luxuries of a handful of privileged individuals. And

with equal readiness and unhesitating decision have the majority of German industries placed themselves at the service of the one great national demand: the upkeep of the army. It is fanciful and false to see in the abundance of munitions and all the other army equipments in Germany, even after a year of isolation from the rest of the world, a proof of Germany's having stored up before the war a fabulous amount of war material. This abundance *is* a proof of the extraordinary ability and willingness of the German people to adjust itself to the supreme need of the hour. Steam engine factories now turn out shells, pianoforte factories furnish cartridge cases, leather chair factories make knapsacks, boiler factories make field kitchens, hat factories make helmets, roller coaster firms build field hospitals, chemical concerns produce coffee- and beef-tea-tablets, and so forth ad infinitum. The dearth of raw materials has largely been

taken care of through the use of substitutes, of potato flour for wheat flour, of tin for aluminum, of steel for brass, of iron electric wires for copper electric wires, and so on; or through the production of artificial materials, such as the production of rubber from oxydized linseed oil or the production of saltpeter—so necessary both for explosives and for fertilizers—from the nitrogen of the air. And in addition to all this, the German sense of economy, ingrained in the people, generation after generation, by a long tradition of domestic and public schooling, has in this war revealed itself more impressively and finely than ever before. There is not a household now in all Germany where retrenchment in eating and drinking is not the unalterable law of daily conduct, where every waste in cooking and baking is not scrupulously avoided, where every crumb and every piece of refuse is not carefully preserved, and from where every par-

ticle of food and clothing that can possibly be spared does not go out week after week to the men who are fighting in France, in Flanders, in Russia, in the Balkans, in the North Sea, or the Baltic. And while this constant stream of loving gifts is going out to the front, the men at the front send back to their families at home what they can spare of their pay. The fact that the German field postal service is handling upwards of 15,000,000 private pieces of mail and packages a day, is sufficient illustration of what results this systematic and considerate economy is bringing both to the men in the field and to their kindred at home. It also shows that the soul of Germany is in this fight, and that it is the people and not a militarist class that is waging it.

And how has the money, needed for this gigantic war, been raised? Let me quote some figures. The total of the third German war loan, raised last October, was

12,000,000,000 mark. It was subscribed by 3,551,746 persons or institutions. Of these, 545 persons or institutions subscribed over 1,000,000 mark each; 849 persons or institutions subscribed from 1,000,000 to 500,000 mark each; 7,274 persons or institutions subscribed from 500,000 to 100,000 mark each; 10,512 persons or institutions subscribed from 100,000 to 50,000 mark each—and so on, until at the end of the list we reach the following figures: 881,923 persons (for here the institutions hardly count any longer) contributed from 1,000 to 600 mark each; 812,011 persons contributed between 500 and 300 mark each; and 686,289 persons contributed less than 200 mark each. In other words, the 3,551,746 contributors to this war loan represent indeed the whole German people from top to bottom, all degrees of income, all strata of society. The German people gave their money joyfully, unreservedly, and trustingly; and there is every indication

that they will continue to do so when other loans are called for.

The spirit of national service, of unconditional surrender to the needs of the State, has enabled Germany to mobilize and to sustain her economic forces in this war as none of her antagonists has been able to do. It has also mobilized her emotional and moral forces in a manner unheard of before. With the exception of a few Socialist theorizers, not a German has lifted his voice during the last twelvemonth but to declare that this war is the decisive test of German nationality, of everything for which Germans have lived and died in the past. American observers have frequently expressed surprise that the intellectual and spiritual leaders of the Germany of to-day —scientists like Haeckel and Ostwald, philosophers like Eucken and Wundt, philologists like Wilamowitz and Diels, historians like Eduard Meyer and Erich Marcks, economists like Schmoller and Wagner,

theologians like Harnack and Troeltsch, musicians like Humperdinck and Strauss, poets like Dehmel and Gerhart Hauptmann —are all of one mind in this crisis, and that their individual or collective utterances are much more impressive as expressions of conviction than as presentations of argument. The reason, I think, is that these men, and with them the mass of the German people, feel that the German cause in this war *needs* no logical defense, that it is impossible to think that the most orderly, industrious, law abiding, sober, and spiritually minded of nations should suddenly have become insane, and from sheer madness of passion and lust of conquest have plunged into a war of aggression against the majority of the world's military powers, in other words into what to all outward appearances would seem certain self-destruction. They believe that Germany has been the victim of a world-wide coalition to rob her of the legitimate fruits of

her unremitting toil for national organization and to crush the spirit of national solidarity that has led to German ascendency in so many fields of higher activity. Whatever may be one's view as to the historical basis for this belief, there can be no doubt that it is this belief more than anything else which is giving Germany in this war such an extraordinary heroic strength.

V

Some months ago, there took place at Namur, the Belgian fortress occupied by German troops since the autumn of 1914, a memorable open air performance. Goethe's *Iphigenie* was produced by German actors in a public square of that town, and the audience consisted of the rank and file of German regiments, with their officers. It would be interesting to know what was going on in the minds of these German soldiers listening in the enemy's

country and within sound of cannon thunder to the most delicate and sublimated creation of German dramatic poetry, the triumphal song of the inner life and of purity of soul. Undoubtedly, there were many gradations of feeling, from sleepiness and ennui to æsthetic delight and patriotic rapture. But consciously or unconsciously, all these men must have felt with particular force that day what kind of a country and what kind of a State had sent them forth into war—a State, assiduously cultivating every higher tendency, every refining influence; maintaining in its schools and universities the noble message of intellectual striving and moral freedom bequeathed by the classic epoch of German literature; a State, demanding much from every citizen, in taxes, in military service, in submission to all sorts of regulations and ordinances; but giving as much to every citizen, in unimpeachable cleanliness of administration, in the schooling of all classes for the true

democracy of public obligations, in securing general respectability and comeliness of the outward conditions of life; a State, conserving every one of its physical and intellectual resources, protecting the streams and the forests, safeguarding the workmen against the excesses of capitalism, and at the same time stimulating every activity, enterprise, and invention, and inspiring every one of its members with a feeling of pride of belonging to it. Is it a wonder that such a State has rallied the whole of Germany around itself, and that the German people is determined to uphold this State, at any sacrifice and against any assault?

The supreme contribution of a nation to civilization consists not in what it possesses but in what it is. The present war has shown more strikingly than ever before what Germany is—a country where highest development of individuality goes hand in hand with unquestioning devotion to the

common cause. She may be satisfied with her contribution to civilization.

NOTE—Germany's enemies, during this war and indeed long before it, have made much of the danger which German efficiency is supposed to be for other less well organized nations. Does this danger really exist?

The history of all the leading nations of the past shows only too clearly that there is a real temptation for a people to use highly organized national power for aggressive purposes. During the last centuries, France used her higher national organization for wars of aggrandizement under Louis XIV and again under Napoleon. England used her higher national organization for wars of conquest on a colossal scale under Walpole and Pitt and Palmerston and Disraeli and Gladstone and Salisbury. Prussia used her higher national organization for wars of aggression under Frederick the Great and again under Bismarck. It can be said, I think, with good reason that Germany, since the foundation of the new empire in 1871, has been less aggressive and less territorially expansive than any one of the great European powers during the same period. Germany has acquired some colonies in Africa and in the Far East. But what are Kamerun and Dar-es-Salaam

and Kiao-chao compared with the British hold upon Egypt, the British subjugation of the South African republics, the Italian conquest of Tripoli, and the French colonial empire in Madagascar, Cochin China, Algiers, Tunis, and Morocco? Wherever Germany has made her influence felt on the globe she has stood for the principle of the open door. Wherever she has engaged in colonial enterprises she has been willing to make compromises with other nations and to accept their coöperation, notably so in the Bagdad railway undertaking. Over and over again she has been blocked in these enterprises by the ill-will of her more grasping rivals, and it is hard to resist the conclusion that the present war was entered upon by her enemies with the hope of shutting her out once for all from the great stakes of colonial expansion.

On the other hand, it is undeniable that the present war itself, with its enormous sacrifices in men and money, has led in Germany to a strong and widely spread popular propaganda for territorial compensations, both on the western and the eastern frontier, to be exacted at the end of the war as presumable "guarantees of durable peace."

It is hard to understand how judicious people can believe that the forcible annexation of territories with hostile and racially unassimilated populations could possibly form guarantees of durable

peace. It is hard to understand how people can fail to see that these annexed provinces would form a constant source of international irritation and domestic dissension, that the necessity of holding them by force would inevitably tend to degrade and debase the whole tenor of German public life. Fortunately, the Socialists are not alone in resisting this martial annexation propaganda. Men of such weight and influence as Brentano, Delbrück, Dernburg, Harnack, Mendelssohn, Schmoller, Siemens, have openly attacked it. The German government, I trust, will find some way at the coming peace conference of restoring the independence both of Poland and of Belgium while at the same time attaching these countries to the economic interests of the new Austro-German federation. The *annexation* of Poland and Belgium would be at variance with the German conception of the State as a moral agency whose mission it is to raise every one of its members to a higher level of public consciousness and activity. The German people, it seems to me, has a rare opportunity before it to demonstrate to the world in a striking manner that its highly developed national organization is *not* a danger to other less well organized nations, that its remarkable display of national will power is backed up by an equally remarkable power of national self-restraint, and

that Germany indeed took up arms for no other purpose than to uphold national achievements made possible by her superior sense of public obligation and solidarity. The only conquest which will add to Germany's greatness as a result of this war is the recognition by the rest of the world of the moral strength imparted to a whole people by an exalted view of the mission of the State. Of this conquest Germany is assured, no matter what the final decision of the battlefield may be.

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